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The north-western part of Roger II.'s kingdom contained two of the greatest centres of religion and learning in Italy; these were the abbeys of Monte Cassino and La Cava, which, in the troubled century which saw the Norman conquest, were beacon-lights of Latin civilisation and Catholic doctrine to the south.

The abbey of La Trinita still stands high over the valley of Cava dei Terreni, six miles distant from Salerno. It was founded as a Cluniac House in 992 by Alferius of the princely line of Salerno. Reconstructed in 1012-1025, it was consecrated by Urban II. in 1092; from the first it was the recipient of noble gifts from Lombard princes and citizens whose skulls are heaped in thousands in the caves behind the church. In 1058, Gisulf II., the last Lombard prince of Salerno, granted to it three noble estates; in 1123, as if to show the sad vicissitudes of Lombard history, Gaimar, grandson of Gisulf's brother Guy, Count of Sorrento, entered the community of monks, granting to the abbey what was left of his patrimony, in the presence of Duke William, whose grandfather had supplanted the old princely race of Salerno. The archives of La Cava contain

the greatest collection of Lombard and Norman diplomata which survive; among the charters of the Gaimars and Gisulfs is the famous Chrysobottle of Roger himself. A centre of learning among the South Lombards, La Cava produced nothing more original than the "Annals of Cava," but her